

Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project

UPLIFTING ADOLESCENTS PROJECT STUDY

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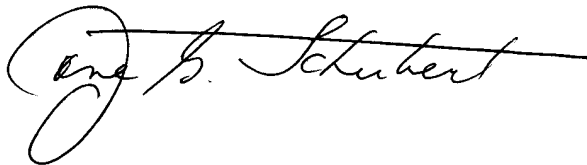
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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jane G. Schubert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Executive Summary

This document summarizes the findings of a study of the experience of participants of the USAID-funded Jamaica's Uplifting Adolescents 2 Project (UAP2). UAP 2 began in 2000 as follow-on to the Uplifting Adolescents Project started in 1996. In the original UAP fifteen NGOs were managed by an international contractor. These NGOs delivered services to adolescents with the overall objective to improve the participants' opportunities to become more productive and responsible citizens through pre-vocational skills training, remedial education to improve reading and mathematics proficiency, and personal development counseling including sex and drug education. UAP 2 continues the work of the UAP with twelve local NGOs under the management of a local Jamaican agency, People's Action for Community Transformation (PACT).

USAID/Jamaica contracted with IEQ 2 to conduct a descriptive study of the impact of UAP 2 by tracing the experience of a sample of program graduates and non-graduates. A team of local Jamaican educators who were experienced in qualitative research techniques undertook the study. These individuals were trained and supervised by IEQ 2 core staff. The study was carried out in April 2003. Data on the experience in the program and current activities were collected on 120 former program participants, 70 of which were graduates of the program, and 50 non-graduates. Interview data were complemented by achievement and participation records maintained in the UAP II Performance Tracking System.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

The Jamaican Uplifting Adolescents Project has been successful in assisting participants to improve basic skills:

- The overwhelming majority of both the UAP graduates (93%) and non-graduates (90%) felt the program helped them improve their math and literacy skills.

"[Before I entered UAP] I couldn't read. Now I can write a little and I know I want to go back to school."

- Entry reading level was a significant risk factor in dropping out of the UAP before graduating (46% of UAP program non-graduates began as total non-readers as compared with 9% of the UAP program graduates).
- Achievement data collected on interviewees during UAP2 participation provide evidence that most graduates and non-graduates improved by at least 1 level in reading (63% of graduates and 53% of non-graduates) and by at least 1 level in mathematics (55% of graduates and 63% of non-graduates).
- Despite these improvements, there are still sizable proportions of both graduates (24%) and non-graduates (51%) who leave UAP without mastering basic reading skills and without being able to read independently.

Participation in the program has contributed to continuing formal education or entry into the workforce:

- 85% of the UAP graduates were back in school or working at the time of the study as opposed to 60% of the non-graduates.

“The maths help me out a lot. I can make change when I go to the shop [my job]. I help my little cousin learn maths.”

“[My UAP teacher] encouraged me to stay in school and work hard to make sure that I pass my Caribbean Council Examinations.”

Completion of the UAP program contributed to former school dropouts returning to and staying in school.

- 62% of graduates who prior to UAP participation had dropped out of formal school programs were again enrolled in school at the time of the study compared to 17% of program non-graduates.

UAP 2 has had a positive effect on changing attitudes and practices towards drugs, alcohol and sexual activity:

- 83% of the graduates said that information they learned in the UAP program had a positive effect on changing their attitudes towards drugs and alcohol.

“[I learned] that we not suppose to use drugs, it can kill, it can destroy our life, our memory and our thoughts, what we want to remember we can not remember it, alcohol-- drink and don't drive and things like that, it can destroy our lives.”

“I use to use [condom] but coming here encourage me more to make my boyfriend use it. I use to talk to two guys but now I have one – one is enough.”

- 100% of the UAP graduates said they are practicing safe sex in order to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. Sixty-four percent of the graduates and 72% of the non-graduates said that their participation in the UAP program has had a positive effect on changing their attitudes towards safe sex practices.

Success in the program was linked to the supportive and safe environments created for the participants and the utility of program content to their daily lives:

- 60% of the graduates were highly positive about the supportive environment created by the teachers in the program.
- 12% of students thought the program provided a safe environment often lacking in the schools they had attended prior to entering UAP.

“[I liked] the teachers how they take time to teach you and help you to always be cheerful and be positive. You can't be around [my teacher] and be sad.”

“[UAP] help me. It help me a lot - to be a man and to stand up and do the right thing for what I want in life. So it can help others in the same way.”

Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program:

- 98% of both graduates and non-graduates have found the things they learned in UAP useful in their everyday lives.
- 96% of both graduates and non-graduates would recommend the program to other people.

Family support, especially in terms of interest in the participant's studies is an important influence in successful completion. Although a higher percentage of non-graduates received

financial support from their families (79% versus 63%), graduates were more likely to receive other types of support:

- 28% of the graduates had family support with their homework while they were in the program while only 6% of the non-graduates had this type of support.
- 90% of graduates talked to their families about UAP while they were in the program while only 78% of the non-graduates did.

Financial difficulty was given by non-graduates as the principal reason for leaving UAP:

- 50% stated that they left the program due to financial difficulties
- 18% stated that they left due to discipline problems or conflicts with classmates.
- 16% left in order to continue their education in a different setting.

IMPLICATIONS

UAP provides a haven for many high-risk youth during a crucial period in their lives. Adolescents, who for various reasons have been excluded, estranged or for personal life circumstances precluded from participating in the formal educational system, report that they find a nurturing environment within UAP where they can improve their skills and prepare for healthier, more productive lives. Despite these positive sentiments, not all participants complete the UAP program and even some of those who graduate UAP fail to leave with adequate literacy skills. Findings suggest the following recommendations:

- Reading is central: The adolescents most at risk are those who enter as non-readers, and those who are likely to complete the program and move into school or work are those with better reading skills. UAP teachers would benefit from support (training and resources) in teaching basic reading.
- Adolescents who leave the UAP program before graduating often leave reluctantly because of life circumstances (e.g., needing to find economic support for themselves or siblings). Introducing within UAP a program to develop better and more open problem-solving skills may help them find alternatives to dropping out.
- Students reported that UAP helped them develop healthier drug, alcohol, and safe sex practices. This may have to do with new knowledge they gained in the UAP program as well as due to the counseling and relationships established in the program's nurturing and supportive environment. This is an element of the program that should continue to be fostered.

Uplifting Adolescents Project Study

This document presents the findings of a study about the experience of participants of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Jamaica's Uplifting Adolescents 2 Project (UAP 2). In 1996 USAID funded Uplifting Adolescents Project (UAP) was implemented as a means of addressing the needs of adolescents considered at risk due to dropping out of school, or engaging in risky social behaviors. Fifteen NGOs managed by an international contractor delivered services to adolescents with the overall objective to improve the participants' opportunities to become more productive and responsible citizens through pre-vocational skills training, remedial education to improve reading and mathematics proficiency, and personal development counseling including sex and drug education.

In 2000, USAID/Jamaica implemented UAP 2 in which the local organization, People's Action for Community Transformation (PACT), began managing twelve NGOs who are continuing much of the same work started under UAP.

The study's objective is to provide an informed description of the experience of graduates and non-graduates of the Uplifting Adolescents Project. An open-ended questionnaire was used to allow examination of the experience of participants in the program. This interview provided data on the living situation of the interviewee, the educational background and their current school and working situation, their experience in UAP, their risky behavior practices, and their future plans. Data on the interviewees from the UAP2 Performance Tracking System were used to augment the descriptions, and, where possible, for triangulation.

The study deals with a sample of the NGOs supported through the program. These organizations were selected through consultation with USAID. They include: YMCA, the Rural Family Support Organization, the Western Society for the Upliftment of Children, Children First, the Women's Center of Jamaica Foundation, and the St. Patrick's Foundation. The programs have some variation in the services they provide the adolescents. Most of the programs are offered during the day and participants attend UAP in lieu of traditional school. The Women's Center however is an after-school program in which most students attend traditional schools in the morning, and UAP in the afternoon, and has a focused arts and crafts curriculum among other numeracy, literacy, and counseling activities. The St. Margaret's Center of the St. Patrick's Foundation targets students with learning disabilities. The YMCA has two centers participating in UAP, the larger of which enrolls only male students. Both the larger YMCA program and the Children First program explicitly say they target street children.

The interviewees were selected according to their graduation status-- graduate or non-graduate. PACT had exit data for ten of the twelve NGOs, for a total of 2238 participants. Of this total group, 1268

participants graduated, 896 dropped out, and 74 left for undefined reasons. A sample of 120 graduates and non-graduates of the program were interviewed (70 graduates and 50 non-graduates in proportion of the total.) The participating NGOs provided a list of their graduates and non-graduates with contact information to the field team coordinator. An attempt was made at selecting a random sample of 70 graduates and 50 non-graduates, however due to difficulties finding the individuals in the random sample, the NGOs assisted in identifying individuals on the list who were accessible and at times contacting those graduates and non-graduates.

The data were examined for success in the program— by graduate or non-graduate, and by gender. Initially the data were examined for each separate program along all of the dimensions measured in the study. Differences among programs were found in only a few areas, and these are noted in the discussion. Along the major dimensions of the study, however, there were no meaningful programmatic differences; therefore for analysis purposes, the NGOs were treated as homogeneous. Two tracer studies were conducted by Development Associates on the first Uplifting Adolescents Project, the first in 1998 and the second in 2000. The trends in the findings from this study are similar to the trends from the first two studies.

BACKGROUND OF THE INTERVIEWEES

The interviewees ranged in age from 10 to 21-years-old. Three-fourths were between 16-19 years of age. All but one of the interviewees were single, and one was in a common law marriage. The majority of the interviewees did not have children however eight non-graduates and two graduates were parents of one child each. Both of the graduate parents were male.

As shown in Table 1, a majority of the respondents did not live with both parents.

Table 1: Participants' Living Situation

Living Arrangement	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
Nuclear family (mother and father)	20%	26%	24%	19%	24%	22%
Single parent family (mother)	35%	44%	41%	63%	41%	48%
Single parent family (father)	20%	12%	14%	-	6%	4%
Other relative	20%	10%	13%	13%	24%	20%
Non-family member	-	4%	3%		3%	2%
Boyfriend/ Girlfriend	-	2%	1%	6%	-	2%
Alone	5%	2%	3%	-	3%	2%

The living situations varied by gender and graduation status. The greatest percentage of both graduates and non-graduates lived with their mothers. However, a relatively high percentage of female graduates (20%) lived with their fathers. This is a contrast to non-graduates where none of the female students lived in single parent families headed by their fathers.

Most of the respondents had completed primary school prior to their involvement with UAP. As shown in Table 2, all but three had some schooling and only 6% had completed less than sixth grade. The majority of male graduates and male and female non-graduates had completed 9th grade or higher.

Table 2: Schooling Prior to Entering UAP

Grade Completed	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n= 19)	Male (n=49)	Total (n=68)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=33)	Total (n=49)
3	-	2%	2%	-	-	-
4	5%	2%	3%	6%	-	2%
5	5%	4%	4%	-	-	-
6	26%	6%	12%	13%	18%	16%
7	5%	6%	6%	6%	12%	10%
8	11%	19%	16%	6%	17%	8%
9	37%	47%	44%	38%	39%	39%
10	-	8%	6%	-	6%	4%
11	11%	2%	4%	31%	9%	16%
Other/ No grades used at school	-	4%	3%	-	6%	4%

VIEWS OF SCHOOL PRIOR TO ENTERING UAP

The majority of graduates and non-graduates of both genders had positive views of the schools they were attending prior to becoming involved with UAP (82%). Most of them said that they had good teachers. However 12% of the interviewees said that there were problems with violence in the schools and/or in the surrounding community. Seven individuals said they left their previous schools due to the problems with this violence. John, who was in seventh grade before he entered UAP, describes the violence in his previous school: “The school not safe. Everyday people come in there and chop students. They go to the hospitals. I feel afraid students walk with big knife.” Wilson, a UAP graduate who lives with his father describes the situation he faced as a ninth grader in his former school:

There was too much bad company [too many bad influences] and the school was in a bad [violent] area. Kids are very rude. They take set on [pick on] me and take away my money. They use to tax me [force me to pay over my money] \$20 then raised it to \$30 and up to \$50 a day. Gangs [boys at the school] always beat on me. I was threatened so I couldn't report it.

Forty-two percent of male and female graduates and non-graduates of UAP had dropped out of school at some point prior to becoming involved with UAP. As might be expected, the two UAP programs targeting street children had a higher rate of pre-UAP dropouts. The top three reasons for dropping

out of school were first due to financial difficulties, second due to discipline problems, and third due to the violence in the community surrounding the schools.

The majority of these individuals returned to formal school after dropping out (63%). Most returned because they wanted to continue their education (94%), the others returned because there was more stability in their lives, or because they were more financially secure. One male graduate said: “Education is the only way out of poverty.”

BECOMING INVOLVED WITH UAP

FINDING THE PROGRAM

Family, classmates and community members were the participants’ principal initial sources of information about UAP. Table 3 shows how the participants learned about the program.

Table 3: How did you find out about UAP?

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
Family	55%	52%	53%	44%	32%	36%
Friends	10%	22%	19%	31%	38%	36%
UAP Staff	5%	6%	6%	25%	6%	12%
Community Member	15%	16%	16%	-	21%	14%
Other	15%	4%	7%	-	29%	2%

Graduates were more likely than non-graduates to have found out about the program from family members. Non-graduates were equally as likely to have found out about the program from friends as they were from family. Of the graduates and non-graduates whose family members told them about the UAP program, most found out from their parents, then siblings and other family members. Male non-graduates and graduates were more likely to have found out about UAP from their friends and classmates than their female counterparts. Male and female graduates were equally likely to have found out about UAP from community members, but no female non-graduates reported finding out about the program in this manner. UAP staff members informed both male and female graduates and non-graduates about the program. The significantly higher percentage of female non-graduates who found out about the program from UAP staff members is a reflection of the outreach efforts of the after

school Women's Center program, which accounted for 90% of those identifying this information channel.

Two following comments illustrate the principal information sources cited by participants:

- “My aunt saw posters that they [UAP staff] were putting out. She told me about it and said that like how I was low in Math, I could come and improve on it.”
- “The student who use to come here tell me that up here [UAP] they counsel you. If you are feeling stressed out they will talk to you and help you and I did like that.”

JOINING THE PROGRAM

The principal reason mentioned by male and female graduates and non-graduates for becoming involved with the UAP was to continue their education. According to one participant: “Me decide to come to learn. Tell you the truth [UAP] help me out. Them teach you a trade. I tell myself I want to be a technician. I was doing bookwork too.” Others (11%) attended in order to improve their reading and language arts skill; 8% decided to attend because the program sounded interesting; and 8% joined in order to acquire job skills. One interviewee expanded on this and said: “because you can come here and get a skill, even get a work or go on job experience, if you never go to high school you can take a test and if you pass you can go back to another school, so there is a lot of opportunity here.” Others (8%) enrolled because their parent or guardian told them they had to attend.

FAMILY SUPPORT

The majority of participants, both graduates and non-graduates, had some form of family support while they were in the program. As seen in the following Table 4, both graduates and non-graduates said that their families helped them once they were in the program.

Table 4: How did your family help you while you were in UAP?

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=18)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=68)	Female (n=15)	Male (n=32)	Total (n=47)
Financial Support	67%	62%	63%	60%	88%	79%
Encouragement	-	12%	9%	20%	9%	13%
Help with Homework	33%	26%	28%	13%	3%	6%
Help with baby	-	-	-	7%	-	2%

The principal way in which the graduates and non-graduates perceived their family support was through financial means. Tamara, a female graduate received financial support from her family. She said: “My mother give me bus fare and lunch money everyday. They provide school clothes bags, books and everything I need. She always see to it that my school fee pay (is paid).” A significant percentage of the graduates said their families offered help with their homework. Franklin, a UAP graduate talks about his family helping him with his homework: “When I got homework that I did not understand they would help me. Also, when we are having programs over here, they would take time out to come.”

As seen in Table 5 below, once in the program, the graduates were much more likely to talk with their parents about the program than the non-graduates.

Table 5: Talking with Family

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Did you talk to family about UAP?	(n=20)	(n=50)	(n=70)	(n=16)	(n=34)	(n=50)
Yes	95%	88%	90%	81%	77%	78%
No	5%	12%	10%	19%	33%	22%
If yes, what did you discuss with them?	(n=19)	(n=44)	(n=63)	(n=13)	(n=27)	(n=40)
Academic Subjects	32%	32%	32%	23%	48%	40%
Job Skills	26%	23%	24%	15%	22%	20%
Personal Development/ Counseling	26%	18%	21%	23%	4%	10%
Program Staff	5%	18%	14%	15%	11%	13%
About the Program in General	11%	9%	10%	23%	15%	18%

Both male and female graduates talked with their families most about academic subjects they learned in UAP. Female graduates were more likely than their male counterparts to talk to their families about personal development and counseling activities. Male graduates were more likely to talk about program staff with their families. Male non-graduates talked with their families mostly about academic subject matter and then job skill activities. Female non-graduates were equally likely to have talked to their families about academic subjects, personal development and counseling activities, and the program in general.

The effect of family support or non-support is illustrated by the cases of Mark, a successful program graduate and Sam, a participant who dropped out of UAP.

Mark is a graduate of UAP. Prior to entering the program, his mother died, and he was living on the street and involved in a gang. One day a local school principal found him on the street and began taking an interest in Mark's well being. He invited Mark to spend time with his family, and encouraged him to continue his education. As time went by, Mark spent more and more time with the principal and his family until the principal became his legal guardian.

His guardian found out about UAP and at age 13 Mark enrolled in the program. He liked how the UAP teachers encouraged him and treated him as though he were one of their sons. He was rarely absent (97% attendance), he participated in a variety of the program offerings (basic skills classes, mentor program, performing arts, conflict resolution, sports, etc.) and by the time he left UAP, his reading, math, and writing skills were level 5 in the JAMAL system (level 4 materials are described as equivalent to grade 6 in the primary school system). Three years after enrolling, as he was completing his time at UAP, a staff member arranged for Mark to visit a local secondary school to see if Mark would feel comfortable in the school. Once he enrolled in the secondary school, the UAP staff kept in contact with him to make sure he continued feeling comfortable in the school. This support and the skills he had gained in UAP helped him make a very successful transition to the new school. During his first year there, he was selected as a "prefect", and the following year he was "head boy." Mark became a leader among his peers. He has been a positive role model and often counsels his peers. He has told the girls about what he learned in UAP about teen pregnancy. He said: "I tell them it will slow them down. They react positively but sometimes they still get pregnant. And I talk to the guys about not being in gangs because I was there and I know what it is like. I tell them they can't make life if they continue this way."

Mark was very thankful for the interest and caring his guardian has given him, and credited the UAP program for making a very big difference in his life. He said had he not been involved with UAP, "Maybe I would be in prison or in a trade somewhere but I wouldn't be able to read. I would be illiterate and fight for the least little thing. I wouldn't know about what life really is and I wouldn't be interested in becoming somebody. I would not have such a high self-esteem. I wouldn't know how to be a good leader. I was taught so many things here at [UAP]. This has been the foundation for me. It is only for me to build on what I have learnt here."

Mark plans on continuing his studies. He would like to be a doctor or a policeman one day. "If I become a police I can have some authority to change some of the things in my community. Some of these bad boys were my friends when I was in the gang. They respect me now and I think I can make a difference."

Some of the children in the UAP program have had to face very challenging home situations that have offered very little in the form of stable family support.

Sam was in UAP for about a year, but dropped out before he was able to graduate. When he was young, his mother would sometimes keep him home from class because of the excessive violence in the community surrounding their home and the school. When he did attend class, he and his friends faced violence inside the school. Some of the older boys would torment the younger students and steal their money. Often Sam would hide and skip class rather than face the boys.

When he was 14-years-old, his mother died while his father was in prison. Not long after that, Sam was faced with caring for his four younger siblings after their oldest sister was killed in a gang related incident. After two years on their own, they found their stepfather who took them in to live with him.

After moving in with his stepfather, Sam found out about the UAP program from a neighbor. His stepfather helped him with the money to enroll in UAP. Sam enjoyed the program. He especially liked the way the teachers addressed each student's needs on an individual basis, and he enjoyed playing football with his classmates. For the first 6 months in the program, his attendance was good (81%) and he participated in many of the program activities (basic skills, performing arts, conflict resolution, cooking, sewing, hassock-making, sports, etc.) Although his initial evaluation showed that he lacked even basic academic skills (level 1 in JAMAL system), he began to make progress in math and was moved to level 2. According to Sam, his stepfather continued supporting and encouraging him while he was in the UAP as best he could. This support however, was sporadic and limited because his stepfather was in and out of jail for drug related crimes. After less than one year in the program, his stepfather lost his job, Sam's attendance dropped dramatically, he slipped back to level 1 math, and eventually he had to drop out in order to work to support his younger siblings. Sam started doing odd jobs at a local grocery store. He dreamed of one day being a pilot, but had a hard time thinking about the future because he had to think about what he needed to do in order to survive from one day to the next, such as finding food. He said: "[I am] not going to make it – me not going to learn to read. So a don't think about the future. Me think about what me a do right now."

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

CONTINUE ON CAREER PATH EITHER THROUGH CONTINUING EDUCATION OR JOB

UAP is designed to assist adolescents to pursue a career path through continuing their education or finding a job after leaving the program. Findings suggest that UAP has been successful in this area. The following three tables show the participants' responses when asked what they were doing prior to entering UAP, immediately after leaving the program, and what they were doing at the time of the interview.

Table 6: Activity Prior to Entering UAP

Activity	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=49)	Total (n=69)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=33)	Total (n=49)
At Home	55%	51%	52%	63%	42%	49%
In School	30%	29%	29%	25%	28%	27%
Job	15%	20%	19%	13%	30%	27%

Table 7: Activity Immediately Following Leaving UAP

Activity	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=33)	Total (n=49)
At Home	20%	10%	12%	44%	26%	30%
In School	65%	50%	54%	31%	27%	28%
Job	15%	40%	33%	25%	47%	40%

*Other- One male non-graduate went to prison directly following his exit from UAP.

Table 8: Activity Today

Activity	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
At Home	15%	14%	14%	56%	32%	40%
In School	70%	56%	60%	25%	29%	28%
Job	15%	30%	25%	19%	38%	32%

As shown in the Tables 6, 7, and 8, UAP has had a positive effect on getting adolescents back in school or employed. It has had a noted effect on female graduates' participation in school and male graduates' participation in school and the workplace. UAP participation also appeared to have some benefits for non-graduates in terms of their activities subsequent to program participation. An increased percentage of female graduates enrolled in school immediately after their participation in UAP. The percentage of female graduates in school was even greater at the time of the study. UAP did not however appear to influence female graduates' participation in the workforce. An increased

percentage of male graduates went to school directly following UAP. The percentage of male graduates in school at the time of the study was greater still. This trend was similar for male graduates going to work. The female non-graduates had increased enrollment in school as well as work immediately following their participation in UAP. These percentages however, had dropped by the time of the study. The male non-graduates were more likely than their female counterparts to go to work directly following their participation in UAP. The percentage of employed male non-graduates had dropped by the time of the study.

As mentioned previously, UAP targets students who are deemed at risk of dropping out of school. From the total pool of adolescents interviewed, 42% of them had dropped out of school at some point prior to becoming involved with UAP. Out of these students 52% eventually graduated from UAP, and 48% did not. The following table 9 displays what these students with a history of dropping out of school were doing at the time of the interview. The results were similar for both females and males.

Table 9: Historical Dropouts' Activity Today

	Graduate of UAP (n=26)	Non-graduate of UAP (n=24)
Home	15%	54%
School	62%	17%
Job	23%	29%

The results shown in Table 9 suggest that UAP was most successful at helping adolescents with a history of dropping out of school when students completed the program. The majority of these individuals returned to school and most of the rest went to work. Only a small percentage of the graduates were at home. If however the students with a history of dropping out of school did not successfully complete the UAP program, the opposite was true. The majority of these individuals were at home, some went to work, and only a small percentage returned to school.

The majority of all male and female graduates and non-graduates who were either in school or employed at the time of the interview say that personnel from the UAP program helped them make the transition from the program to their school or job. Some received advice from the UAP staff:

- Stewart, a UAP graduate who at the time of the study was very happy as a 10th grader at a traditional school said: “[My UAP teacher] told me that some things would be different there from here. She told me to behave myself.”
- Shante was an 18-year-old who even after graduating from the program still found the UAP staff supportive said: “[UAP] teachers gave me advice as I came back to see them.”

Some received encouragement from UAP personnel:

- Adam, a 16-year-old who was studying to be a mechanic and eventually wants to be a soldier said: “They encourage me to let me know learning is important and that I must learn to reach my goal.”
- Sandra, a UAP graduate who then went into the 9th grade said: “[My UAP teacher] encouraged me to stay in school and work hard to make sure that I pass my Caribbean Council Examinations.”

Others were assisted with making contact with their new schools or employers:

- Steve, a UAP graduate who at the time of the study worked at a barber shop four days a week said: “[The UAP guidance counselor] trim down there and he speak with the barbers if they could take me to learn the trade.”
- Daniel, a UAP non-graduate who subsequently entered the 9th grade, said: “The [UAP] principal bring me to the school and tell principal at that school to take me if they have a space.”

The total pool of adolescents (male and female graduates and non-graduates) generally felt comfortable in their schools (88%) and places of employment (94%). No individuals reported incidents in which teachers or students in their new schools, or employees or coworkers in their jobs had shown prejudice against them because of their involvement in the Uplifting Adolescents Program. Annika, a 14-year-old girl who had never gone to school prior to entering UAP, was nervous about these things when she was entering a new school after graduating from UAP. She said: “I was afraid because I thought people would make fun of me and because I missed out primary school, I thought they would call me names when I did not understand. But it was not that way.”

The material and skills the participants learned in the UAP program had been useful in their subsequent jobs and schools. Those individuals who were working at the time of the study said that the math, language arts, personal development, and job skills they learned in the UAP program were useful in their jobs. The individuals who were in school said the math, language arts, and personal development skills they learned in UAP have helped them in their subsequent schools.

A very small minority of male graduates and non-graduates said that they did not learn anything in the UAP program they found useful in their daily lives (7%). Most of these individuals (seven out of eight) said they did learn a lot at UAP, but the material was not relevant to what they were doing in their jobs or schools. One individual expanded on this by saying: “I learn a lot of things here but they have nothing to do with what I am doing now.” Damian, a 14-year-old now in the 7th grade, said the material at UAP was too easy compared to what he was doing in school at the time of the study: “The work here was at a lower level and me do harder things now”.

IMPROVED LITERACY

All UAP programs offer participants the opportunity to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. When adolescents enroll, an evaluation is conducted to assess entry-level skills in reading and

mathematics and in some instances writing. Instruments drawn from the Jamaican Movement for the Advancement of Literacy (JAMAL) are used to assign students to a level and to identify the appropriate instructional materials and approaches. Levels of illiterates range from 1-4 with the following descriptors¹:

- Level 1: Total non-readers
- Level 2: Lapsed literates
- Level 3: Readers with comprehension problems
- Level 4: Advanced readers with weaknesses in comprehension, English, and basic mathematics

Participants in the program are reassessed periodically, and both entry and subsequent “level” placements are maintained at each NGO using the UAP Performance Tracking System. These data were tapped to create a description of the skills of the interviewees and to explore the relationships between skill levels, program perspectives, and participant outcomes.

WHAT WERE THE ENTRY JAMAL LEVELS OF THE UAP INTERVIEWEES?

Only about half of the interviewees had entry JAMAL levels recorded in the information tracking system. Of these, the breakdown is represented in Table 10.

Table 10: JAMAL Entry Level

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=6)	Male (n=27)	Total (n=33)	Female (n=6)	Male (n=18)	Total (n=24)
Level 1-Non-readers	-	11%	9%	17%	56%	46%
Level 2-Lapsed literates	17%	41%	36%	33%	17%	21%
Level 3-Comprehension Problems	33%	33%	33%	33%	22%	25%
Level 4-Readers with Comprehension/English/Math problems	50%	15%	21%	17%	6%	8%

As is evident, a much greater proportion of the non-graduates (46%) began the UAP program as total non-readers whereas over 90% of the graduates began with some literacy skills. These findings

¹ Jamaica--Literacy Facts. *Literacy Exchange: World Resources on Literacy*.
(www.literacyexchange.net/jamaica/jamaicadata.htm)

reinforce that entry reading level is a significant risk factor for dropping out of even the UAP programs.

INITIAL INSTRUCTIONAL GROUP PLACEMENT

Based on their initial assessment, UAP participants are placed in one of the following homogeneous instructional groups for basic skill development:

- Level 1: Getting familiar with reading materials by word recognition techniques (i.e., phonics)
- Level 2: Developing reading mechanisms (e.g., learning letter sounds)
- Level 3: Independent reading
- Level 4: Working on supplementary materials; Equivalent to grade 6 of primary school system
- Level 5 & 6: Established to provide neo-literates with ongoing support

JAMAL methodology is used to teach reading and participants can advance to a higher level when they demonstrate the skills needed for that level. It is also possible that participants can regress to a lower level if their skills lapse.

At least one set of JAMAL level placement data for reading and mathematics was available in the Performance Tracking System for 83% (n=99) of the interviewees. Typically the date of this placement corresponds to the date of entry into the UAP program. Below is a table listing the entry levels for math and reading of the interviewees.

Table 11: Entry Instructional Level

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=18)	Male (n=41)	Total (n=59)	Female (n=13)	Male (n=27)	Total (n=40)
Reading						
Level 1	11%	20%	17%	23%	37%	28%
Level 2	28%	29%	29%	39%	33%	35%
Level 3	39%	42%	41%	23%	26%	25%
Level 4	11%	5%	7%	15%	4%	8%
Level 5	11%	5%	7%	-	-	-
Math						
Level 1	11%	13%	12%	39%	41%	40%
Level 2	17%	28%	24%	23%	37%	33%
Level 3	50%	45%	47%	31%	11%	18%
Level 4	17%	10%	12%	8%	7%	8%
Level 5	6%	5%	5%	-	4%	3%

Once again it is evident that a greater percentage of the non-graduates (63%) entered the UAP program at a pre-literate state (levels 1 and 2) as compared with less than half of the graduates. Level 3 is considered the stage at which the learner is able to read some materials independently. Fifty-five percent of the graduates entered at this level or higher as compared with only 33% of the non-graduates.

In math, the pattern of lower entry skills by participants who later dropout is repeated, however descriptors of the math skills represented by each level were not available.

DID READING AND MATH SKILLS IMPROVE DURING UAP PARTICIPATION?

Subsequent to initial placement, participants may be reassessed to determine if a change in group placement is warranted. When this occurs the results are posted to the tracking system even if there is no change in level. Some interviewees had as many as 6 sets of data recording their group placement approximately every 3-6 months during their participation in the UAP programs. This monitoring is particularly useful since there may not be a “final” assessment when a participant graduates or drops out of the program. Fortunately, many of the interviewees (61%) had more than one set of data thus it was possible to compare their placement when they entered with the last or most recent placement listed for them in the tracking system. Below is a table detailing whether participants’ levels regressed, didn’t change, or improved. Only participants with at least two assessments are included.

Table 12: Change in Instructional Level between entry and the last UAP group placement

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=13)	Male (n=30)	Total (n=43)	Female (n=8)	Male (n=22)	Total (n=30)
Reading						
Decreased by 2 levels	-	3%	2%	13%	-	3%
Decreased by 1 level	8%	7%	7%	25%	9%	13%
No change in level	23%	30%	28%	13%	36%	30%
Increased by 1 level	39%	37%	37%	25%	32%	30%
Increased by 2 or more levels	31%	23%	26%	25%	23%	23%
Math						
Decreased by 2 levels	-	3%	2%	-	-	-
Decreased by 1 level	-	10%	7%	13%	14%	13%
No change in level	54%	28%	36%	38%	18%	23%
Increased by 1 level	39%	45%	43%	25%	50%	43%
Increased by 2 or more levels	8%	14%	12%	25%	18%	20%

What is striking about these data is that the majority of both graduates and non-graduates advanced by at least one level in both reading and math. For a population of adolescents with a history of school failure, these findings suggest hope.

These data are consistent with interviewee perceptions. The overwhelming majority of graduates and non-graduates saw the focus of the UAP programs on mathematics and literacy as positive.

Table 13: Reading

		Graduates			Non-graduates		
		Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
Reading improved in UAP program	Yes	80%	98%	93%	100%	85%	90%
	No	20%	2%	7%	-	15%	10%
Read in free time	Yes	100%	98%	99%	100%	91%	94%
	No	-	2%	1%	-	9%	6%

Both graduates and non-graduates of the program said their reading improved while they were in UAP. About a third of both the graduates and non-graduates explicitly said that it is thanks to the UAP program they are now reading. According to one participant: “[Before I entered UAP] I couldn’t read. Now I can write a little and I know I want to go back to school.”

Of the ten graduates and non-graduates who said their reading did not improve while in the UAP program three female graduates and one male non-graduate said that their reading was already strong before they entered UAP. One male non-graduate gave no reason for why his reading didn’t improve, but he did read in his free time. Three male non-graduates said they had never been good readers; they have had a hard time learning. According to one: “I never do too good in a English, me [I] can’t read”. One male graduate and one male non-graduate said they did not learn anything in UAP: “A learn one or two words up there. A never really get anything from [UAP] – it was like a waste a one year.”

WHAT WAS THE LITERACY LEVEL OF INTERVIEWEES WHEN THEY LEFT UAP?

Finally, it is useful to look at the last recorded literacy levels of interviewees to get an estimate of how many left with at least beginning independent reading and how many left without achieving this very basic level of literacy.

Table 14: Last Recorded Instructional Level

Reading	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=18)	Male (n=41)	Total (n=59)	Female (n=13)	Male (n=27)	Total (n=40)
Level 1	6%	7%	7%	23%	22%	23%
Level 2	11%	20%	17%	31%	26%	28%
Level 3	22%	46%	39%	23%	44%	38%
Level 4	56%	22%	32%	23%	7%	13%
Level 5	6%	5%	5%	-	-	-

While the evidence suggests that reading skills improved for both graduates and non-graduates during UAP participation, there are still sizable proportions of both graduates (24%) and non-graduates (51%) who leave without mastering very basic reading skills and without being able to read independently. Also, based on this sample, it appears that graduates of the program, particularly females, are more likely than non-graduates to leave the program with at least the equivalent of 6th grade reading

DECREASING RISKY BEHAVIOR

The UAP programs focus on personal development, counseling, and sex and drug education has been successful. According to the participants, the program has had positive effect on changing their attitudes on drugs, alcohol, and safe sex practices.

Table 15: Use of Drugs and Alcohol

		Graduates			Non-graduates		
		Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
Tried Drugs	Yes	-	8%	6%	13%	35%	28%
	No	100%	92%	92%	88%	65%	72%
Tried Alcohol	Yes	45%	80%	70%	65%	85%	78%
	No	55%	20%	30%	38%	15%	22%
UAP change attitudes towards drugs and alcohol	Yes	75%	86%	83%	69%	65%	66%
	No	25%	14%	17%	31%	35%	34%

Alcohol use among graduates and non-graduates is similar. Males are more likely to have used alcohol than females. The non-graduates had a much higher rate of drug experimentation than their graduate counterparts. Males were more likely to try drugs than females. While both male and female graduates and non-graduates say that their attitudes towards drugs and alcohol have changed due to their participation in UAP, the program has had the biggest impact on the male graduates.

The participants had the following to say about their changing attitudes towards drugs and alcohol:

- “[I learned] that we not suppose to use drugs, it can kill, it can destroy our life, our memory and our thoughts, what we want to remember we can not remember it, alcohol-- drink and don’t drive and things like that, it can destroy our lives.”
- “When they tell us the danger about them it frighten me so I stay away from them [drugs and alcohol].”

Of the 24% of the participants whose ideas about drugs and alcohol were not changed by their participation in UAP, one fourth had never tried drugs or alcohol. They were not interested in them before they entered UAP and the things they learned while in the program did not make them interested in trying drugs or alcohol. One fourth had never tried drugs but did drink alcohol in moderation. They said that before entering UAP they thought that drinking alcohol in moderation was not a problem, and this view had not changed. In about 20% of this group, the interviewee did use

both drugs and alcohol, and UAP did not convince them to change their behaviors. These individuals had the following to say about their unchanging attitudes towards drugs and alcohol:

- “I don’t see where it (drugs and liquor) is hurting me.”
- “I don’t see anything bad about it because it don’t do anything bad to me [has not caused me any harm].”
- “Me smoke the high grade bush [marijuana]. You see if the police catch you with the low grade, them think you a go turn to coke next. The high grade one force you brain to think more things, but the low grade make me head hurt me. Ganja [marijuana] a nuh drug, it a bush! Me nuh believe what them say – me still smoke [he doesn’t believe marijuana is bad for him so he continues to smoke]. Me nah take coke though... If me can afford a Guinness everyday a will drink it.”

Table 16: Practicing Safe Sex

		Graduates			Non-graduates		
		Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
What are you doing to protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases?	Using Condoms	30%	66%	56%	81%	82%	82%
	Abstinence	70%	34%	44%	18.8%	18%	18%
Has UAP changed your sexual practices?	Yes	45%	72%	64%	88%	65%	72%
	No	55%	28%	36%	13%	35%	28%

All of the participants- graduates and non-graduates, male and female, said they were protecting themselves from sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies. The majority of female graduates said they were abstaining from sex, while the majority of the female non-graduates, and male graduates and non-graduates were using condoms.

UAP has had a greater effect on changing the risky sexual practices of the male graduates and male and female non-graduates than on female graduates. The lesser effect on the female graduates has to do with the fact that fewer of them said they were sexually active when they entered UAP. Also, a greater percentage of them said they were practicing abstinence at the time of the interview.

Some of the participants elaborated on how UAP changed their attitudes towards sexual practices:

- “I use to use [condom] but coming here encourage me more to make my boyfriend use it. I use to talk to two guys but now I have one – one is enough.”

- “I am not really rushing into anything right now. Before, a use to have a lot of girlfriends. But when them [UAP] show me the kinds of disease it just change my mind from sex. It make me really have to look a girl that don’t go around and give away herself [A girl that is not promiscuous].”

VIEWS OF UAP PROGRAM

In general the participants had positive views of the UAP program. They listed a variety of aspects of UAP they liked. The majority of both male and female graduates (60%) said the teachers or teaching methods was their favorite thing about the program. One of the participants elaborated on this by saying: “The teachers how they take time to teach you and help you to always be cheerful and be positive. You can’t be around [my teacher] and be sad.”

UAP USEFUL IN PRESENT DAY LIFE

The participants have found things they did and learned in the program are relevant to and useful in their present day lives. The responses were similar for male and female graduates and non-graduates. The majority (54%) said that the things they learned in the program help them cope with their daily life. One individual elaborated on this by saying: “Personal Development teaches you about personal hygiene, how to keep your body clean, when to change underwear, etc. This programme has helped me to improve.” Others said the subjects they studied in UAP had helped them return to school and understand the material covered in their subsequent classes (23%). One interviewee said: “The subjects help me in High school. Most things that I didn’t get in All-Age they update me on them and when I went in High school I see them and the experience help me to know what I am doing now.” Others said the things they learned in UAP helped prepare them for their subsequent job (21%). One individual elaborated on this by saying: “The maths help me out a lot. I can make change when I go to the shop [my job]. I help my little cousin learn maths.”

LIKES AND DISLIKES OF PROGRAM

Table 17: What about the program would you keep the same?

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
Everything	55%	32%	39%	13%	41%	32%
Subjects Taught	25%	24%	24%	44%	21%	28%
Teachers and Staff	20%	38%	33%	44%	27%	32%
Other	-	6%	4%	-	12%	8%

As shown in Table 17, a large percentage of both female graduates and male non-graduates said they liked everything about the program, and would keep everything the same. Significant percentages of female non-graduates would keep the subjects taught in the program. Male graduates and female non-graduates would keep the same program staff.

Table 18: What would you change to make the program better?

	Graduates			Non-graduates		
	Female (n=20)	Male (n=50)	Total (n=70)	Female (n=16)	Male (n=34)	Total (n=50)
Nothing	40%	20%	26%	19%	32%	28%
Improve Facilities	20%	48%	40%	19%	41%	34%
Increase Financial Support	5%	4%	4%	6%	-	2%
Increase Choices of Classes	15%	12%	13%	13%	12%	12%
Improve Teachers	15%	12%	13%	19%	6%	10%
Other	5%	4%	4%	25%	9%	14%

When asked what they would like to change in order to improve the program, a large percentage of female graduates and male non-graduates liked everything about the program and did not have suggestions on how it could be improved. Many male graduates and non-graduates suggested improving the facilities by doing such things as building more classrooms, improving the existing structures, improving the fields, and creating areas in which to play sports. According to one interviewee: “[There is a] big yard with nothing on it which could used to build more rooms [and] have more teachers so things could be better.” Over three fourths of the individuals who made the suggestion to improve the facilities were from three programs focusing predominantly on males, this explains the gender difference in this answer. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that 50% of the non-graduates said that they left the program due to financial difficulties or because they needed to work, only 2% of them mentioned increasing financial supports as a way in which to improve the program.

Financial difficulties were not the only reasons male and female non-graduates gave for leaving the program. Some dropped out due to discipline problems or conflicts with classmates (18%), others left in order to continue their education in a different school (16%), and the remainder left for a variety of different reasons. The majority of these drop outs said that the UAP program could not have done anything to prevent them from leaving. They said that the decision was already made or nothing could have been done to alleviate the problem. Most of these youth did not talk to anyone in the program about their difficulties leading up to their dropping out.

RECOMMENDING UAP TO OTHERS

The majority of male and female graduates (99%) and non-graduates (92%) would recommend the program to other people. When asked why, some interviewees expanded with the following:

- “I think it would help them because it help me. It will help people who not doing well in their school work.”
- “Because there are a lot of young people out there not doing anything and it can help them to get a skill an improve your self”
- “Because it help me. It help me a lot - to be a man and to stand up and do the right thing for what I want in life. So it can help others in the same way.”

Of the five individuals who would not recommend the program to other people, three thought the program did not do enough to help, one thought the students were too undisciplined, and one thought the program had a bad reputation.

UAP INFLUENCE ON LIFE

The interviewees were asked to sum up their experience in UAP with the questions “What would you be doing if had never been a part of UAP”, and “What are you doing now thanks to UAP?” They gave various answers. The following Tables 19 and 20 show the top three answers for each question.

Table 19: What would you be doing if had never been a part of UAP

	Graduates		Non-graduates	
Top Three Answers	Female	Male	Female	Male
1	At home	At school	At school	Working
2	At school	In bad company/ in trouble	At home	At school
3	On the street	On the street	On the street	Learning a trade

Some of the interviewees elaborated on this with:

- “I would maybe be pregnant or on the street or sitting at home doing nothing.”
- “Maybe I would be in prison or in a trade somewhere but I wouldn’t be able to read. I would be illiterate and fight for the least little thing. I wouldn’t know about what life really is and I wouldn’t be interested in anything.”
- “I would not be able to get a job, I would not be able to fill out forms, maybe I would still be on the streets.”
- “Maybe I would be dead. I don’t know.”
- “I would probably be home sitting down or working at a mechanical shop.”

- “Tell you the truth I would try and learn a trade.”
- “Maybe I would be going to a different school and thinking about different things...”
- “Probably, I would still be in the wholesale or go to work with my stepfather in the sawmill.”
- “Still on the road. Probably in jail, smoking, gambling. My life would be a disaster.”

Table 20: What are you doing now thanks to UAP?

	Graduates		Non-graduates	
Top Three Answers	Female	Male	Female	Male
1	Job skills	Reading	Reading	Reading
2	Math	Personal development skills	Job skills	Math
3	Reading	Going to school	Personal development skills	Job skills

Some of the interviewees elaborated with these responses:

- “I would not be reading, I wouldn’t know about personal hygiene I wouldn’t have any interest in becoming somebody. I would not have such a high self-esteem. I wouldn’t know how to be a good leader. I was taught so many things here at Children First. This has been the foundation for me. It is only for me to build on what I have learnt here have been able to do the Maths so well and me wouldn’t think about doing medicine.”
- “I would not be looking a work with such confidence. The programme changed my general out look of life.”
- “Wouldn’t be in a high school getting high school teaching. Up here [UAP] help me manage my schoolwork.”
- “I wouldn’t know certain things like nuff a the book work. It help me to build up more in my work. I see a better future because of it.”
- “Yes, I would have no idea to do barbering. I would not think about that because I would have no one to encourage me about [to do] that. I can see my way through and meet my financial needs. I am not getting underpaid because I basically pay myself. I basically have full experience. I am a professional barber now.”

CONCLUSIONS

The Jamaican Uplifting Adolescents Project has been successful in assisting participants to improve basic skills. Most of the graduates (93%) felt the program helped improve their math and literacy skills. The non-graduates, although they were not able to successfully complete the program, also thought their math and literacy skills improved as a result of their participation in UAP (90%).

Participation in the program contributed to continuing formal education or entering the workforce. Most of the graduates were in school or working (85%).

Completion of the UAP program contributed to formal school dropouts staying in school. A majority (62%) of the graduates who had dropped out of the formal school system at some point prior to their involvement with UAP were enrolled in school at the time of the interview. Few students who dropped out of both the formal school system at some point as well as UAP were in school at the time of the interview (17%).

UAP 2 has had a positive effect on changing attitudes and practices towards drugs, alcohol and sex practices. The majority of the graduates (83%) said things they learned in the UAP program had a positive effect on changing their attitudes towards drugs and alcohol. All of the UAP graduates said they were practicing safe sex in order to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. Sixty-four percent of the graduates and 72% of the non-graduates said that their participation in the UAP program had a positive effect on changing their attitudes towards safe sex practices.

Programmatic reasons for success were related to the supportive and safe environments created for the participants and the utility of program content to their daily lives. Some of the students thought UAP provided them with a supportive environment often lacking in the schools they attended prior to UAP. The graduates were highly positive about the supportive environment created by the teachers in the program.

Participants' had a high level of satisfaction with the program. The majority of both graduates and non-graduates (98%) have found the things they learned in UAP useful in their everyday lives. The majority (96%) of both groups would also recommend the program to other people.

Family support, especially in terms of interest in the participant's studies was an important influence in successful completion. Although a higher percentage of non-graduates than graduates said they received financial support from their families (79% versus 63%), graduates were more likely to receive other types of support. Graduates were more likely than non-graduates to learn about the UAP program from family members (53% versus 36%). Graduates were more likely than non-graduates to have family support with their homework while they were in the program (28% versus 6%). A larger percentage of graduates (90%) than non-graduates (78%) talked to their families about UAP while they were in the program.

Non-graduates cited financial difficulty as the principal reason for leaving UAP. Other reasons for leaving the program included discipline problems, conflicts with classmates, and leaving in order to continue their education in a different school.

IMPLICATIONS

UAP provides a haven for many high-risk youth during a crucial period in their lives. Adolescents, who for various reasons have been excluded, estranged or for personal life circumstances precluded from participating in the formal educational system, report that they find a nurturing environment within UAP where they can improve their skills and prepare for healthier, more productive lives. Despite these positive sentiments, not all participants complete the UAP program and even some of those who graduate UAP fail to leave with adequate literacy skills. Findings suggest the following recommendations:

The program is successful for both graduates and non-graduates in improving mathematics and literacy skills; however, even with these improvements, many participants leave UAP with inadequate reading skills. Most at risk are those adolescents who begin the program as total non-readers. These findings suggest the need for more intensive training of the teachers in the teaching of reading. One source of support may be the Ministry's Reform of Secondary Education Project (ROSE II), which has a strong focus on diagnostic tools and intervention approaches for building the basic skills of underachieving adolescents. Also useful would be teacher support (training and resources) for motivating adolescents and helping them overcome a history of failure.

Program completion appears necessary to encourage participants who have had difficulties staying in the formal school system to return to school. This suggests that these students should be targeted for special interventions such as counseling and training in problem solving. Adolescents who leave the UAP program before graduating often leave reluctantly because of life circumstances (e.g., needing to find economic support for themselves or siblings). There are indications that UAP non-graduates did not know how to share/discuss their problems with others or know where they could go to seek help. Counseling and workshops for the students as well as for parents and family members could foster greater parental involvement in assisting their children/ward and promote greater collaboration between home and school.

The negative opinions of some students as to the physical conditions of the UAP sites suggest that addressing this issue might contribute to greater participant success with the program. Asking participants how they could contribute to site improvement and building their ideas into learning sessions might address these conditions.

Students reported that UAP helped them develop healthier drug, alcohol, and safe sex practices. This may have to do with new knowledge they gained in the UAP program as well as due to the counseling and relationships established in the program's nurturing and supportive environment. This is an element of the program that should continue to be fostered.

The high success rate and the satisfaction shown by participants argue for continued support of the UAP. Given the precarious economic conditions of Jamaica, such support will likely need to come from international donors in the near future.

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